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THE MINER'S DREAM.

A MINING DRAMA
IN FIVE ACTS.

By Dr. Albert Carr.

HILL CITY S. D.
1910

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find a true vein we know we got somethin. Jo's no fool, and he's dead stuck on his ground. But he needed money for developement, and went back home to see if he could raise a little. He don't say it right out in his letters, but I am sartain somethin has occurred that has put him in high sperrits. I can't think of anything else that would do that fer him, but money to develope his claim.

Enter Saryann, L. She is very plainly dressed, and dusty and wayworn.

Saryann. I beg your pardon, sir, but can you tell me, where I will find the Gold Nugget mine?

Jim. The Gold Nugget mine? That's about a mile from here. They're workin about a dozen men thar, and widder Flynn is runnin the boardin house.

Saryann. That's the place.

Jim. Did you come from town?

Saryann. Yes, this morning.

Jim. Did you walk all the way?

Saryann. No; I rode with some people up to where this road turns off from the main road—about three miles below here. They put me on this road, and then drove off the other way.

Jim. That was mortal kind of 'em. I'll bet it was those Bentons!

Saryann. That sounds like the name.

Jim. They'll do a person a favor that don't cost nothin, but they'll never go out of their way to do it. They're Hoosiers; they came from Injiana.

Saryann. They seemed like well-meaning people.

Jim. Yas, they mean well, but that's as fur as they ever git. Say, young woman, my name's Jim Brier. Anything I can do fer you, just say so.

Saryann. How is the road to Mrs. Flynn's? Is one liable to get off it?

Jim. If one is not acquainted with it, it's liable to lead to most anywhar. It's rough, and part of it only fit fer a squeerrel to climb,

Saryann. Are there people living along the road?

Jim. Not a soul until you git to the Gold Nugget mine. Is widder Flynn a relation o' yourn?

Saryann. No. I was told in town, she wanted someone to work for her; that she was a good, kind woman, and so—

Jim. You've come after the job?

Saryann. Yes. I would like the place.

Jim. She's a good woman. Her maiden name is Bridget, and that's enough to tell you, she didn't come from Sweden. What's your name?

Saryann. They called me, Saryann, at home. I like that name. Call me that.

Jim. I will:—but is that your first name or your last name?

Saryann. Whether first or last, it is my name.

Jim. [*Aside.*] She's a mighty handsome woman, whoever she is. She seems a little careful about her name. Huh, huh!—May be—Oh, wal! [*Aloud.*] I'm workin at the Gold Nugget, myself, and boardin at widder Flynn's. This place here belongs to a friend of mine, who is liable to drop in here any day with a bunch of cap'lists. He writ me to straighten his cabin up, and have it in shape. That is what I am here for. So, if you can wait until I do a little fussin and fixin, and arrangin of affairs around here, I'll show you the way to the Gold Nugget mine.

Saryann. I am in no hurry. Can't I help you clean up the cabin?

Jim. Wal, by jingo, I guess you can! A woman can do more at settin to rights a cabin, than a dozen old prospectors like me. I thank you, miss, I thank you—

Saryann. Call me, Saryann.

Jim. Wal, I will—here, Saryann is the key. [*Gives her key.*] I put a load of

grub in thar the other day, and I guess, you'll find it settin around most anywhar.

Saryann. Well, I'll clean up the cabin and get some dinner, if you want me to.

Jim. Wal, I want you to, and I'll pay you for doin it—anything you ask.

Saryann. Don't mention pay, my friend. I expect to live among these people, and am anxious to attain their goodwill,—become one of them.

Jim. Here's my hand, Saryann. [*Slaps hand in hers.*] You've got me and my goodwill, right now, and I'll be hanged! if I don't see, you get the rest of 'em in this camp. We're common people here, but when put to the test, you'll find thar's gold in us all.

Saryann. I believe you. I am going to call you, Jim.

Jim. That's right, that's right!

Saryann. I love plain, simple people. I've met the other kind. They smile, but the majority of them have poison in the heart.

Jim. You bet! Thar's some 'o that kind in town. They judges people by their dollars and the clothes they wear; not by the nature that's in 'em.

Saryann. When dinner is ready, I'll

call you.

Jim. I'm mighty glad you cum.

[*Saryann ascends to cabin, unlocks door, and enters. She busies herself in and around cabin, hanging out blankets and quilts.*

Jim. I'm the darndest, luckiest feller in the world. Clean up that cabin! Why, I can't clean up my own. I have no more idee of what constitutes a clean cabin than a mountain-rat. And here comes a woman, a fine, nice woman, takes the job off my hands, and invites me to dinner. I'm impressed with that woman. Thar's somethin uncommon about her. Widder Flynn's all right, but she don't belong in the same category with that 'ar soft voiced specimen of humanity.

Enter Dutch Henry, L. Has green willow walking stick and stuff tied up in red handkerchief.

Henry. Gan you dell me, vhere I am, mister?

Jim. Wal, to begin with, you're in the state of Colorado.

Henry. I know dot, but vot blace is dis?

Jim. This is Gold Nugget camp.

Henry. Dot's vhere I'm gomin to.

Jim. Wal, you're here.

Henry. [*Setting down stick and bundle.*] Is dere some goot gold here?

Jim. All that we find is good.

Henry. Is dere blenty of grount to be taken?

Jim. Worlds of it.

Henry. Is dot so! Vot's your name?

Jim. Jim Brier.

Henry. Shim Brier?

Jim. Yas; Jim Brier.

Henry. My name is Henry Eichenwoortzel.

Jim. Wal, I'll just break off the last part of your name, and call you, Henry.

Henry. Dey used to call me, "Dutch" Henry. I'm a Dutchman, you bet!

Jim. I thought you was as soon as I heard you speak. What you looking fer, a job?

Henry Nod right now. [*Takes out pipe and smokes.*] At present, I am looking vor rich minerals.

Jim. You're prospecting.

Henry. Yah, I'm prospecting. [*Takes rock out of pocket.*] Here is a piece of rock vot I picked oop on der roat, pelow. It looks like dere vas sulphides in it. Dere may pe some kilurium in it. Vot do you denk aboud it?

Jim. [*Examining rock.*] That may be good rock, but thar's a turrible quantity

of it in this country.

Henry. Is dot so! Blenty of it?

Jim. Whole mountains.

Henry. [*Takes another rock out of pocket.*] Here is anoter kind, vot I fount. Dere maype somedings in dot,

Jim. [*Examining rock.*] There maybe, but it would take an expert to find it.

Henry. Is dot so—an oxbert! [*Jim returns rocks to Henry.*] Do you know vhere I gan fint a goot glaim?

Jim. Most anywhar, whar you can find free-gold.

Henry. Is dere blenty of free-golt here?

Jim. To find,—yas.

Henry. I look arount. [*Puts rocks in pocket.*] Gan I stob here, tonight?

Jim. I don't live here.

Henry. Oh, you don't! [*Saryann comes out on porch.*] Who is dot voman? [*Points to cabin.*] Does she live here?

Jim. No, she's cleanin up the cabin for me.

Henry. Is she your vife?

Jim. No, she's a stranger.

Henry. (*Grinning.*) A stranger!

Jim. Yas, she jest cum.

[*Saryann retires into cabin.*

Henry. Is dot so! How far is der Golt Nugget von here?

Jim. About a mile.

Henry. Vel, I look arount ofer der gountry vor avhile, und vhen I gome pack, you show me der vay to der Golt Nugget mine.

[*Picks up stick and bundle.*

Jim. I'll show you the road.

Henry. (*Extending hand.*) I'm glat, I met you.

Jim. I'm glad I met you. [*They shake hands.*] I hope you'll find what you're lookin for.

Henry. Of I do, I haf a beenanzy. I look arount a liddle. Maype I find scmedings.

[*Going towards smithy.*

Jim. Keep your eye out for mountain lions.

Henry. Mountain lions! Is dere some here?

Jim. Yas, your liable to run onto one. Have you got a gun?

Henry. [*Draws large old-fashion horse pistol.*) Yah, I got vone.

Jim. That'll do.

Henry. Vhere dit you get dot hump-pack?

Jim. I caught it, lookin at a camel.

Henry. Is dot so!

Jim. Come around, after awhile, and we'll give you some dinner.

Henry. I be dere.

[*Drops stick and bundle down near smithy, ascends mountain path to L.R.E. and exits.*

Jim. A stray Dutchman. He seems like a good, honest feller. He's after gold, but I'll bet he don't know anymore about rock than I do about the hereafter. [*Looks off, L.*] Hello! here's a wagon coming up the road. That looks like Jo, on this side. I don't see no cap'lists with him. There's a feller driving—and—and—a woman.—Jo—yes, he's helping her out of the wagon. They're coming this way.

Enter Jo Marlow and Mary Marlow, L,

Jo. Well, if here isn't Jim! [*Grasps Jim's hand and shakes it.*] I'm mighty glad to get back, Jim, mighty glad to get back. This is my young wife, Jim. Mary, this is my old friend, Jim Brier; the best friend, but you, I have in the world.

Jim. (*Dumbfounded.*) This—your wife! Then, you're married!

Jo. Married! (*Laughs.*) Of course.

Jim. Wal, I'll be—[*Smiles—extends hand to Mary.*] Mrs. Marlow, I'm very happy to meet you. [*They shake hands.*] Very, very happy to meet you. [*Mary*

looks around with surprise and disappointment.] Quite a journey you've cum. [*Aside.*] Blamed if she don't act like she'd got into the wrong pew.

Mary. [*To Jo.*] Is this the mountain home you have told me so much about?

Jo. Yes, love, this is my little mountain home.—Our little mountain home.

Enter Saryann from cabin with waterpail and descends to well-spring.

Mary. What woman is that?

Jo. I don't know. Jim, who is that woman?

Jim. She's a stranger. She jest came along here, today. She offered to clean up the cabin, and I told her to go ahead. She says, her name is Saryann.

Jo. I must thank her for her kindness.

[*Jo retires to Saryann at well-spring. Greets her with smiles and affability. Gets water for her and carries it up and into cabin. He is followed by Saryann.*

Jim. [*Aside.*] Jo's married a young woman. She looks like a kid. [*To Mary.*] I think, you'll like it here, Mrs. Marlow. The air is fine,

Mary. I should judge, it is.

Jim. The water can't be beat.

Mary. It must be excellent here.

Jim. Yas, it comes right from the spring. The mountains are full of springs. Jo never writ me anything 'bout being married. It is quite a surprise to me, [*Forced laugh.*] quite a surprise. I think you'll like it here.

Mary. (*Dispiritedly.*) I hope so.

Jim. [*Aside.*] She don't act very cheerful about it. She seems downhearted. I must cheer her up. [*Aloud.*] This country is all right, ma'am. The 'arth is full 'o gold. And look, the June roses ars all over the mountain sides. The squeerrels are chattering, the chipmunks playin hide-an-go-seek, and the voice of nature is a singin in the pines. Oh, this is a grand country, Mrs. Marlow! I know you'll injy it as soon as git acquainted with all it's beauties.

Mary. Perhaps, I shall. But life demands something more substantial than mere beauty. It must be terrible here in winter.

Jim. Not so turrible. Of course, thar's snow and some cold. But thar's plenty of wood, so we don't mind it.

[*Mary sits down on rock L.C.*

Mary. Have you been here many years?

Jim. Quite a number.

Mary. Have you a mine?

Jim. I have several claims.

Mary. Do you get gold from them?

Jim. Yas, some.—They are all promising claims.

Mary. I suppose you sell your gold, every month?

Jim. I haven't had any to sell, so fur. My claims are all good prospects, but not payin mines, yet.

Mary. Have you ever found a paying mine since you came here?

Jim. No,—not yet. But I expect to.

Mary. What do you do for a living?

Jim. Work around, do assessment work fer others, and sell a piece of ground, occasionally.

Mary. I hope when I understand it all, I shall like it better.

[*Enter Jo from cabin followed by Saryann smiling. She nods affirmatively to him, and retires into cabin.*

Jim. [*Aside.*] I don't see no cap'lists. The way this woman talks and acts, I am struck with the idee, that thar's a shortage of cash somehow.

Jo. [*Decending to stage and advancing.*] Come, Mary, we will go up to the cabin. I want you to see the inside of my little mountain home. It is rough, dear, but with you in it, it will be a palace.

[*Jo and Mary ascend to cabin and exeunt into it.*

Enter Henry L.R.E. and decends mountain path. Has piece of rock in hand.

Jim. Thar comes that Dutchman with a chunk of rock.

Henry. [*Advancing to Jim*] Here is somedings fine. [*Shows rock to Jim.*] I fount it oop in der mountain by a big dree. Dere's somedings in it, sure. It may be ponelite.

Jim. [*Examining rock.*) It looks more like winderlight to me.

Henry. Vinderlight! You poke some fun at me. You don't denk dere's anydings in it. Here's anoder biece of rock vot I fount. [*Takes rock out of pocket.*] Dot's ore, sure. Look, dere's pyrites in it. See, dey're sticking oud all dronghit.

Jim. [*Examining rock.*) Thar may be something in this. Go and get a hat full, grind it up, and pan it. The mortar, pestle, and gold-pan is over thar in the smithy.

Henry. I do dot. Maype I've fount a golt mine.

[*Exit up mountain path at L.R.E.*

Jim. That Dutchman's rock crazy. He may find a mine. They say, a fool for luck. [*Sits down on rock, LC.*) So Jo's

married. I wonder if he got any money. If he didn't, his mining work 'll go kind 'o slow. He's the most dead sure feller that he'll find it, I ever saw. But it takes powder and grub to open a mine. I blieve I'll go up to the cabin and visit with the folks. I am anxious to see more of the stranger with the gentle voice.

[*Ascends to cabin and exits into it. Enter Henry L.H.E. and decends mountain path. Has hat full of rock.*

Henry. I fount blenty. Shoost denk I gome here, look arount, und fount, yah, perhaps, a golt mine. Maype I get a hundert tousand dollar for it. I could buy a prewery mit dot. (*Examines rock.*) Dot looks looks like der real stoff. I try it vonce. [*Goes to smithy and puts rock in mortar. Brings pestle and mortar forwad. Sits down on rock L.C.*] No vone gan tell vot's in a rock until dey try it. (*Pounds rock in mortar with pestle.*) Of gourse, dere is rock mit golt dot you gan see. Dot is free-golt. Ven you get dot, you know you got it. (*Pounds rock.*) Maype der grount vot I got dis rock on is logated. I ditn't see no stakes. Oh, vell! of it is, I logate some glaims on der end or der side. (*Pounds.*) Dere is somedings exciting aboud dis

brospecting piziness. Vone time you got it, und denn—you don't got it. Dot's fine enough. I put it in der pan. [*Picks up pestle and mortar, and goes to smithy. Empties mortar into gold-pan. Advances with gold-pan*] Now, I go zu der grick und pan it.

[*Exit, L.*

Enter Jo and Mary from cabin. They descend to stage and advance to center.

Mary. I fear, Jo, we will have to struggle hard here to get the necessaries of life.

Jo. Fear not, little woman. everything will come.

Mary. But, dear, what will we do for food and clothes while you are searching for gold?

Jo. I will work for some mining company until I get a stake, and then go back to work on my claim.

Mary. (*Taking out bill.*) Here is all we have left. Twenty dollars.

[*Puts bill back in pocketbook.*

Jo. I am going to work at the Gold Nugget. I wrote to the superintendent while East. He said he would put me to work as soon as I returned. I requested him not to say anything about my application. I don't think he has. I expected

to interest some folks back in our town, but I did not succeed.

Mary. If you could find some wealthy man to take an interest with you, and hold you up financially, while you were opening up your claim, everything would look bright to me. As it is, Jo, the way looks dark, ahead.

Jo. Really, my dear wife, your fears are needless. A prospector never knows where his next dollar is to come from, but it always comes, just the same. People who are used to farm life, where everything moves with plodding certainty, don't understand this.

Mary. I suppose the Lord provides for the prospector as he does for the birds of the air,—or do prospectors live on air?

Jo. Neither, my love, but we don't worry. It just comes, somehow.

Mary. Perhaps,—somehow.

Jo. I am strong, and will fight life's battle as well here as anywhere else. I have a rich prospect. A prospect that, I am absolutely certain, will become a mine. With a rich mine, my love, pouring it's gold into our laps, what more can we ask for? For myself, I am confident and well satisfied. I have you, now, to fill my life with joy and happiness. With you, I feel, there is no

condition of time or place, I could not conquer. With you and the claim, I have love and hope. Supported by love and hope, what man, who is industrious and faithful, ever failed! Come, Mary, and see my mining ground.

[*They ascend mountain path and exeunt L.R.E.*

Enter Jim from cabin with water pail. Decends to stage.

Jim. That Saryann is a remarkable woman. I wonder whar she came from. Work out! She don't look like no hired help I ever saw. Work for widder Flynn, that old Hibernian! Seems like thar's somethin in my nature that rises up agin the idee. Maybe this strange lady is broke—plum out of coin. I'm sartain she's a decent woman. Never saw a woman before in my life, I was so taken with, in so short a time. If she's broke, I'm not! Maybe she's an angel in disguise. But thar isn't anything in this blamed camp that calls for the visit of an angel in disguise. I don't quite make it all out, but, pshaw! no man ever won anything with winning, that didn't take a chance. I'm goin to take a chance on her decency and goodness, if I loose. She'll not work for Bridget Flynn, if I can help it. She'll do no hashing among that

gang of gawping miners at the Nugget—no, by gosh! not if I can prevent it.

Enter Saryann from cabin. She descends to stage.

Saryann. Are you going to bring that water?

Jim. Wal, I plum forgot it. Come here. [*Saryann advances to him.*] Are you married?

Saryann. (*With a shudder.*) No.

Jim. Are you broke?

Saryann. (*Showing dollar.*) This is all, I have left.

Jim. Only a dollar!

Saryann. (*Returning dollar to pocket.*) Yes; that is why, I am seeking work.

Jim. I've a proposition to make to you. It may seem strange to you, but strange things often happen.

Saryann. They are happening every day in this wide world of ours.

Jim. I have a fine cabin, comfortable, and full of grub. All it needs is a little settin to rights. Don't go to work. Take that cabin and live in it. I'll see that you don't need for anything, until something turns up fer you better 'an workin fer Biddy Flynn. You'll have the cabin all to yourself. I'll nerver come near it, except—Ahem!—you send fer me.

Saryann. I am a perfect stranger to you. Why do you make me this kind proffer?

Jim. Why? Because I am a miner, and know what it is to be broke, and without friends—that's all.

Saryann. For the present, I accept. God bless you.

Jim. I never made any mistake doin anyone a good turn. I'm goin to be a brother to you. All I ask in return is fer you to be a sister to me.

Saryann. Jim, I'll be a sister to you. Get the water. I will take it up to the cabin. The dinner is on the stove.

Jim. Yas! Yas! [*Gets water at well-spring. Saryann takes pail, ascends to cabin and exits into it.*] The more I see of that woman, the more I'm convinced. she's no common, ordinary, biscuit-bakin, how-dy-yer-do female. [*Enter Henry with goldpan, L.*] Wal, did you find anything in that rock?

Henry. I vas sure—but it don't pan oud.

Jim. That often happens, Henry—often. I've pounded and panned enough rock to make a young mountain, and in most of it never found a color. If gold could be found in every rock, you and I wouldn't be lookin for it.

Enter Jo and Mary, L. R. E. They descend mountain path to stage.

Saryann. (*Coming out on cabin porch and calling.*) Dinner!

[*Exit into cabin.*

Jim. Dinner, Jo! Come, Henry.

[*Jim and Henry ascend to cabin and exeunt into it. Jo and Mary advance.*

Jo. What do you think of my claim, Mary?

[*Mary throws arms around Jo's neck and drops head on his breast.*

Mary. (*With sob.*) I don't know, Jo.

Jo. You love and I'll hope, and all will be well. Come, dinner is ready.

[*Jo, with arm around Mary, leads her slowly up to cabin. Exeunt into cabin.*

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Inside Jo Marlow's cabin. Windows piled with snow. Door, L. Curtained opening to off R. Cot with curtains, right rear. Stove, left rear. Woodbox with wood, behind stove. Table, right center. Large clock on shelf rear of stove. Chairs about room. General hardup appearance to whole scene. Mary discovered seated in rocking-chair at stove, warming. Annie with doll in her arms asleep on floor, right.*

Mary. Five weary years have passed away since I first entered this cabin. When I came I was a trusting young wife: now, I am a mother, despondent, and broken-hearted—a diappointed woman. I realized my mistake the instant I set eyes upon this place. As I foresaw, so has it come to pass. Hope without reality is the very emptiness of life. [*Goes to window and looks out.*] Snow, nothing but snow! Oh, this dreary place! Oh, these lonesome mountains!

Nothing; nothing but the hope, that Jo will strike it rich in the mine sometime —yes, sometime, sometime. He is my husband, and I suppose there is nothing for a wife to do but to submit. Annie, my child! Why, she's sound asleep! I'll put her in her little crib.

[*Takes Annie up in arms and exits, R.*

Knock at door, L. Door is pushed open gently. Tom Gordon peers in for a moment and then enters.

Tom. There is plenty of beautiful snow this winter. The unfortunate woman who wrote "Beautiful Snow" liked snow better than I do. The door was unlocked. Mary must be here. What a miserable hole for an attractive, intelligent young woman to spend her life in! Love in a cottage, indeed! Love in a prospectors cabin with potatoes, bacon, and flapjacks! All bosh! Love and poverty seldom companion long.

Enter Mary, R.

Mary. What, you here!

Tom. Where's your husband?

Mary. At the mine.

Tom. You are alone, then?

Mary. Tom Gordon, why do you come here! Please go away, Tom, and

don't come here any more, at least, when you have reason to believe I am alone.

Tom. I'd never come here, were it not for you. This is your birthday.

Mary. Yes, I am twenty three today.

Tom. And Jo was forty two last June. [*Laughing cynically.*] Love a young man but fool an old one.

Mary. What do you mean?

Tom. (*Advancing and seizing Mary's hand.*) I mean I love you—that I would give my life for you. Come, Mary, be reasonable. Abandon this life and come with me. I will take you back into the beautiful world, and give you those things, I know you yearn for.

Mary. (*Withdrawing hand.*) I am soul sick.

Tom. I have money. I have made it speculating in mines in this great mining state—Colorado. I bought Brier's ground two weeks ago. Paid him twenty five hundred for it. It joins Jo's claim, but I know Jo's off the vein. He will never get anything out of that ground. The gold is on the claim, I have purchased. Come, Mary, drop this millstone, and smile on me. I will make you happy.

Mary. I must escape from this life.

Tom. Why delay? You have strug-

gled with hopes and toiled with dreams—hopes as vain as the fancies of a child; dreams as insubstantial as the rainbows of a summer shower. There can be no change, no reform. The conditions will continue. Nothing can be done, but to abandon them. What have you to depend on? Nothing, but the uncertain prospects of a mining claim.

Mary. I feel at times as if I should go mad.

Tom. Many a noble woman, with the patience of a saint, has wearied out her soul in the cabin of a worthless prospector, and ended her days in a madhouse. Come, Mary, let me help you. Let me save you from such a wretched end.

Mary. I have listened to all you have said. I must have time to think it over. Now, go.

Tom. One kiss—only one.

Mary. Not now. Tom. Please go!

Tom. Since you desire it, I will. But remember what I told you: Love a young man, but fool an old one.

[*Exit at door, L.*

Mary. With misery on one side and error on the other, which way shall I turn! Jo works hard, sleeps hard, and says little. But he fails, and I want success. Is there anything that strips

the soul of woman of all it's adornments like poverty and silence. I have warned Jo, but, with haggard face and sealed lips, he toils on and heeds me not. I wish he would listen. I feel, I cannot much longer resist—Tom's love. [*Sinks into rockingchair and sobs hysterically. Enter Jo Marlow at door, L. Mary rises and hurriedly wipes eyes.*] Why have you returned so early, Jo? Anything wrong at the mine?

Jo. I have no powder.

Mary. Why don't you get some?

Jo. I have no money. Where's Annie?

Mary. Asleep.

Jo. You have been crying. What have you been crying about, my dear?

Mary. I feel like crying occasionally, and so—I cry. That's all, Jo.

Jo.(*With an expression of deep pain.*) Poor girl!

[*Picks up iron mortar and pestle. Exit at door, L.*

Mary. No powder. No money. How full of pain these words to the struggling prospector who thinks he sees his fortune in the next blast! Jo is honest, kind, and true. And in everything else but the mine and it's future, sensible. No powder—no money. How pitifully these words affect me. [*Rushes to door,*

L. and calls.] Jo! Jo!

Enter Jo at door, L.

Jo. What is it, dear?

Mary. (*Throwing arms around his neck.*) You have no powder, Jo—no money. But you have me.

Jo. Yes, dear, but your soul is sorely tried.

Mary. How about yours?

Jo. Mine? I hardly feel as if I had a soul. What little I suffer seems only to increase my sympathy and pity for the sufferings of others. The ledge is looking better every day. But without powder and money, I am at a standstill.

Mary. Why don't you borrow some powder?

Jo. I have—from all the miners in the camp. I am ashamed to ask for more.

Mary. Borrow some money.

Jo. I have, already—more than I shall ever be able to repay, unless I strike it.

Mary. Why not sell the claim?

Jo. Sell the Golden Ledge! Sell the greatest hope I have on earth, and with the few dollars I receive for it pay up my debts, and go back empty-handed to the ranch and hopeless toil! Ask me anything but that and I will do it. I will not give up that mine, if the whole

world forsakes me.

Mary. (*Pathetically.*) Do you mean it, Jo?

Jo. (*Firmly but desperately*). I mean it. [*Knock at door, L. Jo opens door. Enter Saryann and Jim at door, L.*] Why, it's Jim and Saryann!

Jim. Howdy, Jo! [*They shake hands.*] Thar aint no ground-hog runnin 'round in this weather, and the squeerrels are keepin mighty close.

Saryann. How are you, Jo? [*Crosses to Mary.*] And how are you, Mary dear?

Mary. Very well thank you, Saryann. [*They kiss.*] Come by the fire and take off your wraps. [bb.]

Jo. Jim, did Saryann bring you, or did you just come along? I don't see how you got through the snow.

Jim. I'll explain. Saryann's claim, the one she lives on, jines my claim, the one I live on, so we have to be kind o' neighborly—[*Door pushed open, L. and donkeys head appears.*] Snoops, you son-of-a-gun! this is no barn. Git out! [*Kicks at donkey, Head withdrawn.*] I'll have to go and shut that burro up, or he'll be in here settin in the rocking-chair with his feet on the stove.

[*Exit at door, L. Jo puts wood in stove.*

Saryann. I've worried lots about you, Mary, for the last two months. The winter has been very snowy, and I feared Annie might be sick. Jim managed to get to town two weeks ago, and bought such a quantity of stuff. He said he was going to bring some of it over to you. Jim is on the other side of sixty, but he works awful hard. He's growing more hump-backed every day. I suppose, you have heard he sold his claim—that claim that joins Jo's? Tom Gordon gave him twenty five hundred for it. Jim's tickled to death.

Enter Jim at door, L. with arms full of groceries.

Jim. Here, Mary, is a little barthday present fer you, and thar's more yet to cum.

Mary. Thank you, Jim, ever so much. How kind of you!

Jim. I don't let the squeerrels eat my grub. [*Mary disposes of groceries.*] I'm getting hump-backed, Mary, like a reg'lar camel. Saryann said, I better go see a doctor. But I eat hearty and sleep like a tomcat—[*Racket off, L. Braying and kicking of boards.*] Thar's that darned burro tryin to git out of the shed. He's the awfulest little devil to kick you ever saw. He kicked that lop-eared

hound of Dugan's two months ago, and and the blamed dog hasn't been in sight of the place since. How's the claim, Jo?

Jo. At a standstill.

Jim. What's the matter?

Jo. No powder.

Jo. Why don't you get some?

Jim. No money.

Jim. That's jest what I wanted you to say. [*Takes out large old-fashioned pocket-book.*] Here's five hundred dollars. I brought it along for you, (*Taking money out of pocket book.*) and, as soon as the snow settles, I'll bring you over a hundred pounds of powder.

Jo. (*Taking money.*) I'll take the money, Jim, and the powder too. But God knows when I will be able to repay you! But I must keep working that mine.

Jim. Stay with it, Jo! It's the most promisin claim in the deestrict.

Saryann. Where's Annie?

Mary. Asleep. [*Cry heard.*] No she's waking up,

Saryann. I must see the little dear.

[*Mary and Saryann pick up groceries and exeunt, R.*

Jo. (*Grasping Jim's hand.*) Jim, my old friend, how am I going to express my gratitude to you!

Jim. By keepin to work on the mine. The gold is in your claim as sure as the ground-hog is in his hole. I think Gordon is fooled. That's why I sold to him.

[*Takes out pipe and smokes.*

Jo. I hope you are right about my ground, Jim. All there is to my poor life depends upon that claim.

Jim. Stay with it, Jo. You'll get it all in a bunch, some day. She'll crack open some time, and show you streaks of gold runnin in every direction like the cracks in a broken winder pane.

Jo. I'll not forget *you*, Jim, if I ever do strike it.

Enter Saryann, R.

Saryann. Come, Jo. Come, Jim. Supper is ready. You are hungry, I know, Jim.

Jim. I could eat a burro!

Saryann. Not Snoops, I hope.

Jim. No, he'd kick the liver out of me.

Jo. Jim, you go along with Saryann and eat your supper. I cannot eat just now. I've not felt right for several days. I worked very hard, today, cleaning up the tunnel and drilling. I have had an exhausted and drowsy feeling, all the afternoon. While you are at supper, I'll just drop down on the cot and take a nap.

I often do this, after a hard day's work, before I eat. It seems to revive me.

Jim. All right, Jo. You'll feel better after your nap.

[*Exeunt Jim and Saryann, R.*

Jo. I know my young wife is wearying with my fruitless efforts—my unsuccessful search for gold. It seems in this life some are destined to fail, let them strive as they will. I am forty two years of age, and between me and all love, all I hope for, is that mine.

[*Sits down in rocking-chair. Lights half down.*

Enter Saryann, R.

Saryann. Are you here yet, Jo?

Jo. Yes, here in the rocker.

Saryann. You better come and drink a cup of tea.

Jo. Not now. I have no appetite for anything.

Saryann. I am worried about you, Jo.

Jo. Bless you, Saryann, I'm not worth worrying about.

Saryann. Don't speak like that. I fear you are overworking yourself.

Jo. I must work.

Saryann. I know it. We must all work.

Jo. I must find that vein—find it soon. This poverty is getting unendur-

able. My poor young wife! God help me!

Saryann. (*Starting towards him.*) Jo, I—[*Restrains herself.*] You have five hundred dollars.

Jo. That five hundred dollars must be paid back. Other debts paid—paid soon. I cannot live on the kindness of others, nor tax the clemency of my friends much longer.

Saryann. I have never seen you so despondent.

Jo. I cannot submit to poverty. I cannot bear the censure and contempt that failure brings upon me. If my soul were dead, I might—but alas!—Oh, I have not been feeling right for some time. There is something wrong with me physically.

Saryann. I am confident, all you need is rest. Stop work for a few days, and I know you will feel all right again.

Jo. Stop work! How can I!

Saryann. I am certain you have a mine. A few days will make no difference in the long run. Listen to me, that's a good fellow. You know I wish you well.

Jo. I know you take a wonderful interest in me.

Saryann. Indeed, I do, Jo.

Jo. Why do you?

Saryann. [*Startled.*] Because—because I sympathize with you in the severe struggle of your life. I have fought and struggled with life.

Jo. Have you? And been disappointed and laughed at in your most earnest efforts?

Saryann. No one laughs at you, Jo.

Jo. Perhaps not. I imagine things of late. I'm getting cranky, I guess. But I'm doing good work at the mine. I'm sure of it, now. [*Rising.*] If I had the powder, I'd go and put in a shot, to-night.

Saryann. Jo—Jo, you worry me! Really, I don't know what to say to you.

Jo. (*Dropping down in rocking-chair.*) I'm puzzled, too. Have you ever been down to your last dollar?

Saryann. Yes, yes—

Jo. Did you give it up, not knowing where the next was to come from?

Saryann. No; I found friends.

Jo. Friends! That's what is crushing me. I have friends—the best of friends. They have done everything for me. But, I am still down, never up, always down.

Saryann. (*Seizing his hand.*) Pardon me, my good friend, but I cannot help expressing my concern for your condition, this evening.

[*She drops his hand*

Jo. What difference will it make? I am still here with the bonds of honor, love, and necessity demanding success—success, where there is only failure, only failure.

Saryann. Oh! if I could *help* you, I—

Jo. Thank you, Saryann, thank you! Mary and I have much to thank you for.

Saryann. What *can* I do for you, Jo?

Jo. Do for me? God bless you, no one can do anything for *me*. There is only one thing that can do for me, now. Only one thing that will bring sunshine into my life, rest to my mind, and justice to my friends.

Saryann. What is it, Jo?

Jo. Gold—gold.

Saryann. If I had gold, I would give it to you. Give it all to you.

Jo. In God's name!— would you, Saryann—all—to me?

Saryann. I have no gold, and yet, Jo, there is something I can do for you—something in this dark hour of your despondency and despair.

Jo. Pray for me.

Saryann. (*With pathos.*) I will, Jo, I will.

[*Exit hurriedly, R.*

Jo. Were she my own sister, she

could not express greater solicitude and concern for my welfare. But Mary—Mary is young—poverty is killing her. [*Groans.*] What can I do? I cannot abandon the mine, now. I cannot throw down the drill, when I can see the yellow stain of gold upon it's point. No, by heavens, no!—even though Death waved me back, no. I must work on. I feel like I wanted to kneel down, and pray to God, tonight, to help me. Why should I? My heart has been a living prayer, lo! all these toilsome years, and with every year the burden of my life has grown heavier. [*Lights very low.*] I am in the dark. (*Springing up.*) What if I gave one maddening cry, would heaven hear me! [*Trembles.*] What's the matter with me tonight? My mind is running away with me. I never felt like this before. A heavy drowsiness is creeping over me. I must sleep, I must sleep.

[*He retires into curtained cot in the right rear corner of the room. A pause—then dream in tableau. The rear scene fades away, and the face of a mine tunnel appears. Fuses, lit, spit along to loaded holes in wall of tunnel. Flash—explosion without noise. Rocks fall.*

Jo enters tunnel with lighted candle; picks up piece of rock and examines it with enthusiasm and delight. Strong light thrown on wall shows it spotted and streaked with free-gold. Exit Jo from tunnel, R. Dream tableau fades away. Light up, but very low.

Jo. (*Rushing from cot and calling loudly.*) Jim! Mary! Saryann! [*With great excitement.*] I've struck it! I've struck it! [*Enter Saryann, R. followed by Mary and Jim. Jim has lighted candle.*] I've struck it!—See, the wall of the tunnel is ablaze with gold. Mary, my love, my darling, your patience is rewarded at last—at—last—

[*Reels, falls into rocking-chair, and faints.*

Jim. Quick! Saryann—

[*Saryann feels Jo's face and pulse.*

Saryann. Mary; Jo has a terrible fever.

Mary. That mine will cost him his life, and prove my ruin.

Annie runs on, R. in night-gown.

Annie. Where's papa? [*Sees Jo, runs to him.*] Papa—papa! [*Drops head in his lap.*]

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Inside Tom Gordon's cabin. Table rear with gold scales, microscope, glasses, bottles, and other articles used in assaying and analyzing for minerals. Large fireplace in rear scene. Fire burning. Door to right of fireplace. Tom's overcoat hanging on wall near table with deed in pocket, visible. Several chairs about room. Tom Gordon discovered seated near table examining some ore. Tom has jumper on.*

Tom. The claim I bought from that hump-backed fool, Jim Brier, shows a rich streak, but the streak leads towards Marlow's ground. I am satisfied, now, Marlow has the body of the ore. I fear, my lead is but a spur of the main vein, and that the main vein is on Marlow's ground. The course of my lead is not favorable. I'll get that claim of Marlow's, if I have to pay five thousand for it. I have offered his wife twenty five hundred for it. If she can persuade her loving husband to deed it to her, I'll get the claim. She's wild to get rid of it,

and get out of the country. I must have that claim. [*Laughs cynically.*] I need it in my business. I'll help her out of the country, if I get the claim. Marlow is very sick. He may die. If he should, that will free his wife. If Marlow wasn't such a faithful, honest, doating fool, he'd see a few flies in the milk by this time. But they say, love is blind. It is well that it is. What a fool Marlow is over that woman anyway! She wants to get away from him, but her conscience is tender. Well, she's working with that conscience of her's. She'll rock it to sleep some day, and leave old Jo sitting on his dump, counting the pine-cones. I believe I'll walk over and take a look at his mine. It is some time since I was in his tunnel. I don't think any of his friends are working there now. [*Puts on hat and overcoat. Exit at door, R. R. Speaks outside.*) Whose in the mine, Henry?

Henry, [*Outside.*] Flynn. He's loating.

Tom. [*Outside.*] I'll be back shortly.

Henry. [*Outside.*] Ve shoot, priddy quick.

Tom. [*Outside.*] Good! I'll not be gone long.

[*Report of blast from off rear.*

Enter Henry at door, R.R.

Henry. Dot's der blast. Vell, I'll shoost sit down vhile der schmoke is glearing avay, und take a schmoke. [*Takes out pipe and fills it.*] I am vorking for Gorton to get a liddle stake. Vhen I get it, I go pack und vork mine own glaims. I denk, I got a gouple of dandies. Of I get a golt-mine, I don't vork any more. I puy a prewery und take it easy. [*Lights pipe.*] It's doo bad Sho Marlow is sick. Of he vas vell, I got a shob mit him. Sho's a fine veller. [*Sits down.*] Dis Gorton is a qveer kint of shap. I don't like der vay he spooks arount. He seems to me like he vas grooked somehow. He has crosscut in his mine, und is on a beeline for Marlow's grount. Of he gets on Sho's grount, dere'll be drouble—dot is of Sho find it oud. Grount is a goot ding, but it dakes money to oben it oop. Of a veller's got a goot glaim, und don't got some money, vot gan he do? Sho's got der best grount in der camp, but he don't got der money to oben it oop mit. Den he vork so hart, unt veel so bad, dot he got sick. Der Gold Nugget mine petered oud. Dere's noddings doing dere now. Dey thought dey hat a beenanzy. Of Sho don't strike it, der

camp's deat. I hope he's gettin petter. Dot young vife vot he's got is down on der gountry. She don't like it here. Dey got vone kid, und Sho loves dot shild like it vas a liddle angel come down von heaven. Oh, Sho's a fine man! Saryann is taking care of him. Shim Brier is glean gone on Saryann, but he's afraid to tell her. I denk she likes me priddy vell. Of I strike a goltmine, I dackle her. Of I got her, Shim vould go grazy. Maype he'd gommit zourzide. I don't denk Saryann cares a pretzel for der olt zardine. Vy, he's sixty yahr olt of he's a day. Und den dot hump on his back is no be-*yoo*-ty mark. Vot does an olt loon like dot vant mit a voman like Saryann! Viddow Flynn vants him, und she is all right vor him. Her son, Shack Flynn, is vorking here.

Voice. [*Outside.*] Hello, there!

Henry. Dot's young Flynn galling.

[*Rises, empties pipe, and puts it in pocket.*

Enter Tom at door, R. R.

Tom. Flynn is calling you, Henry.

Henry. Yah, I go!

[*Exit at door, R. R.*

Tom. (*Taking small package out of pocket.*) Here are some of Marlow's

drillings—the drill hole mud or pulp. I found it close to one of the lower holes he had drilled. I will examine it under the microscope. [*Takes off hat and overcoat. Hangs overcoat on wall near table. Examines drillings with microscope.*] Gold—yes, full of gold. [*Takes another small package out of overcoat pocket.*] Here are some drillings from another hole about three feet away from the hole of the drillings I just examined. I will take a look at it under the microscope, [*Examines drillings with microscope.*] Gold—yes, full of gold. One more shot, and Marlow will be in a wide vein or shoot of ore. I must have that claim at any cost before that next shot is fired. I'll investigate farther. I'll weigh these drillings, put them to soak in a cyanide solution, and find out the value of Marlow's vein to the ton. [*Weighs drillings. Pours some water into a glass, and then some solution from a bottle. Holds up glass.*] That's poison stuff! Pah! it smells like peach pits. If Marlow's wife would get the deed to his claim, and then give him a little drink of that—

Enter Henry at door, R. R.

[*Tom sets glass down on table.*

Henry. I vant a gouple of small ore

sacks.

Tom. I'll get them for you.

[*Exit L.*

Henry. Of I fint a golt-mine, I don't vork any more, dot's sure. [*Sees glass.*] Vot's dot! Vater. Yah, I bin dursty. I dake a drink.

[*Raises glass to drink.*

Enter Tom, L. with small ore sacks.

Tom. Stop! Hold on! That's poison—deadly poison! It would kill fourteen men.

Henry. Is dot so! [*Sets down glass.*] I don't vant any.

Tom. You want to be more careful around here, or you'll kill yourself, some day. [*Gives Henry sacks.*]

Henry. (*Going—aside.*) Of I drank dot, vhere vas I!

[*Exit at door, R.R.*

Tom. I'll put the drillings in the solution, let it stand for awhile, and then decant. [*Puts drillings in mixture in glass.*] If that Dutchman had drank this dose he would have made a quick transit to the unknown. (*Pushing glass far back on table.*) I should think the Dutch fool would know better.

Enter Henry at door R.R. with specimens.

Henry. (*Giving Tom specimens.*) Dere is a spot in der vall like dis. It vas pig as your hant.

Tom. (*Examining specimens.*) This is rich looking ore, Henry.

Henry. Yah, but I'm sure ve're glose to Marlow's glaim. Ten feet more vill pring us inside his line, dot's sure.

Tom. It may turn, Henry.

Henry. How gan it? Der mountain vont durn.

Tom. We'll see. You will commence drilling at once. Flynn can hold the drill for you.

Henry. Vot vill you do, of you get on Marlow's grount?

Tom. That's my business.

[*Henry slyly plucks paper from Gordon's overcoat.*

Henry. (*Aside.*) I quit dis shob pridy soon.

[*Exit at door, R. R.*

Tom. I'm beginning to think that Dutchman is getting too curious. [*Knock off, L.*] Come around to the other door.

[*Knock off, L, again. Exit, L. He immediately returns followed by Mary.*

Mary. Jo was able to sit up today for the first time in three weeks. I have

succeeded in persuading him, as you suggested, to deed the Golden Ledge to me. The transfer was made before Jim Brier. He is a notary.

Tom. Did Jo tell Brier he was going to give you the claim outright?

Mary. No. Jo told him he wanted the deed made out to save bother in case of death.

Tom. Excellent forethought.

Mary. I am tired of it all. Pay me the twenty five hundred dollars you offered for the claim, and I will deed it to you. But when I do, I can never go back to Jo.

Tom. No; he would kill you. He is crazy over that claim. (*Slips arm around her waist.*) I am your only hope. Whenever you are ready to quit, come to me. (*Aside.*) I am confident I can sell the two claims in a short time for thirty thousand, at the least. (*Aloud.*) What will you do with the money after I pay you?

Mary. Give it to Jo.

Tom. And then?

Mary. Go with you.

Tom, How about the kid?

Mary. [*After a mental struggle. Drops deed.*] Her father will care for her.

Tom. The tranfer of the claim can-

not be made here. Brier is the only notary here. You wouldn't want him to know anything about our business, would you?

Mary. Oh, no!

Tom. Then we'll have to go to town, and make the transfer there. When will you be ready?

Mary. Tonight.

Tom. Good! I'll meet you at the forks of the road with my horse and cutter.

Mary. I'll be there at nine o'clock.

Tom. Good, again, my darling! I suppose, I may kiss you now?

Mary. Please, no.

Tom. Well, have your own way.

Mary. (*Going.*) Goodby!—At nine o'clock.

[*Exit, L.*

Tom. She's a charming little woman. Marry her! Yes, if affairs go right; no, if they go wrong. If those infernal officers get on my trail,—but tut, tut! I must not think of that. I have forty thousand dollars anyway, and that will carry me through. It takes a clear head and a cold heart to win in the world's game.

Enter Mary, L.

Mary. My deed! I dropped it.

Tom. (*Looking down.*) Here it is.

[*Picks up deed and gives it to her.*

Mary. What if I had lost it!

Tom. That would have knocked our plans.

Mary. Yes, I would have had to go to Jo, and ask for another deed. That might have excited his suspicion. He trusts me implicitly now.

Tom. I must have that claim for protection—for protection of my own ground.

Mary. You shall have it, Tom.

Tom. (*Smiling.*) And the wife with it?

Mary. Yes, and the wife with it. My mind is fully made up. I have resolved to cast away the old, and accept the new.

Tom. You have come to your senses at last.

Mary. I can hardly bear to return to the cabin with it's sickness and misery. What do I care for a mine! I want comfort, society, and love. In the silence and lonesomeness of this horrid place, I have listened to the wild hopes of a man, who would sacrifice me and everyone else to their fanciful expectations. My mind is made up. I am resolved, fully resolved. It may be wrong, Tom, but I must escape from this living death. I can restrain myself no longer.

[*Throws herself into Tom's arms.*

Tom. (*Embracing and kissing her.*) Mine, at last!

Mary. (*Slipping from him.*) At nine o'clock, Tom.

Tom. Nine o'clock—at the forks of the road. [*Exit Mary hastily, L.*] I've won the wife, and in a few hours I'll have the husband's claim.

SCENE II. *The path to the mine.*

Enter Mary, L.

Mary. Tomorrow everything will be over between Jo and me. Tom and I will take the train, and soon be miles away. The next thing will be to absolutely free myself from the man who deluded me with his talk of mines and wealth, and the beauty of his little mountain home. There can be no wrong in this—no wrong for me to disentangle myself from the net of poverty and misery he cast about me. By selling the mine, I'll save Jo from himself. When that claim is gone, he'll come out of his foolish dream.

Enter Henry, L.

Henry. Goot-day, Mrs. Marlow. How's Sho?

Mary. He sat up today.

Henry. Den he's petter?

Mary. Yes—some.

Henry. He's peen very sick.

Mary. Yes, very.

Henry. Dit you have der doctor?

Mary. No; Saryann took care of him. She seems to understand all about sickness.

Henry. Dot's a goot voman!

Mary. She's very kind.

Henry. Dere's no humpoog aboud her. She's no hitity, goot for nix. Of she's a frient, she's a true frient. I bet she took goot care of Sho. Vell, Sho's a fine veller, und I'm glat he's petter.

Mary. I must hurry back—

Henry. Stob a moment, Mrs. Marlow. I vant to tell you somedings. Tom Gorton is drifting into Sho's glaim. Der ore leat is small, but very rich. Blease dell Sho to hang on.

Mary. (*Aside.*) Another crazy mining fool! (*Aloud.*) I'll tell him. Good-day!

[*Exit, R.*

Henry. I thought I saw her goming oud of Gorton's cabin. Die other tay, I saw her valking mit Gorton in dis same path, und dey vas talking very glose mit each other. Dere's somedings oop. Maype Sho's vife is sick of him. He's an olt veller, und she's young. Gorton, he's young too, und got der money. Oh,

dese vimmins! You have to keep some enderdainments for dem all der vhile, or dey ged avay. Let me look vonce vot I got oud of Gorton's coat. I vant to fint somedings oud vot he's oop to. [*Examines paper.*] Vy, it's Shim Brier's deet!--Und it's not regorded. Dot's lucky! I'll show dot Gorton somedings. I'll learn him vot it is ven he dells dot Irish Flynn, I got pretzels in my het, und schnakes in my poots. Shim is mine frient, und Sho is mine frient. Dey are both drue men, und Dutch Henry vill stant by dem.

Enter Tom, L.

Tom. I thought you were in the mine.

Henry. Doo much powder shmoke. I gome oud for a liddle fresh air.

Tom. What are you doing over here? Hunting squirrels?

Henry. No; spring shickens.

Tom. You are getting quite bright, Henry. You'll be a smart man after awhile.

Henry. You denk so?

Tom. You better go back to the mine and go to work.

Henry. Vhen I get retty. Dot mine don't pelong to me, und I don't pelong to dot mine.

Tom. Well,—what's come over you?

Henry. Noddings iss gome over me. I'm shoost grawling oud von under somedings. Vot kint of poison vas dot in dot glass?

Tom. Some cyanide solution for testing for gold. [*Laughs.*] You don't think, I put it there to poison you, do you?

Henry. Of I trank it, I vas a deat Dutchman.

Tom. I'll have to be more careful of my stuff, or some fool *will* kill himself.

Henry. Dot's right, Gorton, you'll have to be more gareful, or—you may get killed yourzelf.

Tom. (*Aside.*) I must get rid of that Dutchman. (*Aloud.*) Has anyone passed by here?

Henry. How do I know! I haven't been here all tay.

Tom. Well,—since you came?

Henry. I shoost came.

Tom. Did you see a lady pass?

Henry. No, not since you game.

Tom. Since I came!

Henry. It vent avay shoost pefore you game,

Tom. What went away just before I came?

Henry. Shim Brier's burro.

Tom. You make me tired!

Henry. Dot burro, he vent—

Tom. Oh, d—n the burro! I am going away tonight.

Henry. (*Quickly.*) Vhere you goin?

Tom. Away. Here's the key. [*Gives Henry key.*] Be careful what you eat and drink around that assay table. I've no time, at present, to attend a funeral.

Henry. I eat und trink noddins by dot table, dot's sure. (*Aside.*) Byn Gott! I keep avay von *dot* table.

Tom. Tell Flynn, we won't need him for eight or ten days. I may be back in a day, possibly not in a week.

[*Exit, R.*

Henry. Vell, now, I vas boss. [*Puts key in pocket.*] I touched him oop a liddle. He don't vants to fire me yet—nod yet. I ditn't tell aboud Mrs. Marlow. I'm no shump. He vants to find oud of I saw her go py. Dere is somedings oop. I find oud vot it is, priddy soon. I keep mine eye on him. [*Looks off R.*] Vy, he's going into Marlow's tunnel! I bet—yah, yah—dot's it! Dot Gorton's a rascal, sure. I vatch him vhere he don't see me. Of he don't look oud dere may be a funeral—breceded by a neg-tie party.

[*Steals off, R. watching and tip-toeing.*

SCENE III. *Inside Jo Marlow's cabin. Same as scene in act second. Jo discovered seated in rocking-chair with quilts in chair and pillow to his head. Saryann stands near him with glass and spoon.*

Saryann. There now, Jo, take your medicine.

Jo. I always take my medicine, no matter how bitter. [*Takes medicine.*] You are very kind to me.

Saryann. Some one must take care of you, Jo.

Jo. Yes—Mary would, but she don't understand how to care for sick folks like you do.

Saryann. It seems not.

Jo. I'm hardly worth your kindness.

Saryann. Don't talk that way, Jo. It is a real comfort to care for you.

Jo. Am I a good patient?

Saryann. The very best.

Jo. (*After a moments thought.*) Did you ever love, Saryann?

Saryann. What do you mean, Jo?

Jo. Love a man?

Saryann. (*Confused.*) That's a queer question.

Jo. Come to think, it is. But tell me this: if you loved a worthy man, and he

loved you, would his misfortunes dishearten you?

Saryann. No; they would bind me closer to him.

Jo. That man would be fortunate in that love. Indeed, he would. What do you think of love?

Saryann. I hardly know, Jo. Love brings joy, and love brings pain.

Jo. A life without love must be very vacant.

Saryann. Very vacant, very vacant, indeed.

Jo. I have hungered for love.

Saryann. You found it.

Jo. Yes, I found it. But it seems sometimes that I might loose it, unless—unless my luck changed.

Saryann. Everything will come all right, Jo—all right.

Jo. You comfort me, greatly. I don't see what I would have done without you. [*After a pause.*] I wonder why Mary was in such haste to have me deed the claim to her? I guess she thinks I'm going to die. Where is Mary?

Saryann. She said, she was going out to get a little fresh air.

Jo. (*Simply.*) She may have gone over to look at the mine. Saryann, you don't think I'm going to die, do you?

Saryann. No, Jo—gracious no! You are getting stronger every day.

Jo. Where's Jim?

Saryann. He has gone to town.

Jo. It is very lonesome without Mary. Please go and see if Mary is coming.

Saryann. I will, Jo.

[*Exit at door, L.*

Jo. There is a noble woman. I am certain she has had some great trouble in her life. How strange, but somehow lately, whenever I think of Mary, the life seems to die out of me. I have not loved and caressed her as I did, when we were first married. I fear I have been too lost and absorbed in the mine to think and act properly towards her. Maybe somehow in this whole affair, I have made a mistake.

Enter Mary at door, L. followed by Saryann.

Mary. (*Coldly.*) Are you feeling better?

Jo. Yes,—I guess I'm better.

[*Exit Saryann, R.*

Mary. (*Indifferently.*) Have you had anything to eat?

Jo. Saryann made me a little broth. Where have you been, dear?

Mary. (*Taking off hood and shawl.*)

Out—out in the fresh air.

Jo. (*Smiling—simply.*) Were you over to the mine?

Mary. Over to the mine! What should I be doing at that mine?

Jo. (*Abashed.*) I thought you might like to look at it. It is yours, now.

Mary. You talk like a child. If you were not sick, I'd expect you to have some sense.

Jo. I'm not very strong, yet, that's true.

Mary. There is something in real manhood, that even disease cannot overcome.

Jo. I don't quite understand you, dear.

Mary. You never have understood me, sick or well.

Jo. I'm sorry. Maybe when I get out of this sickness, this poverty, I'll understand everything better. Please give me a drink. [*Mary hands Jo glass of water indifferently. He raises it towards his lips. Hand trembles. He spills water. Lowers glass and holds it with both hands.*] I am terrible shaky. Saryann will hold the glass for me, when she comes. Please set it on the table. [*Mary takes glass and sets it down sharply on table. Jo winces. A pause—*

then, pitifully.] Come, Mary, let me hold your hand a moment. I want to tell you how sorry I am for you; how my heart aches for the disappointment and misery of your life in this bitter struggle.

Mary. (*In gentler tone.*) There is no need of that. The conditions are still here. Regrets don't change them.

Jo. (*Rising with effort.*) If you won't come to me, I will go to you.

Mary. (*Positively.*) Sit down. [*Jo sinks down into rocking-chair.*] In your delusion, I found despair; in your silly sentimentalism, I may find disgust.

Jo. Mary, I do not understand you. Has something happened—some strange thing entered into your fancy, some viper of suspicion crept into your heart? Send Saryann away, if—

Mary. Send Saryann away! What for? I hope you don't think, I'm jealous of her?

Jo. I—I didn't know.

Mary. I am most grateful to her. She has relieved me of a task I could never have fulfilled. I would say something to you, Jo, something I ought to say, but I fear in your conditon, you are too weak to bear it.

Jo. (*With some resolution.*) You are so considerate, it must be important.

What you have to say, say it, dear.

Mary. (*Sitting down in chair near table, R. Quietly.*) Jo, I have resolved to seek my own extrication from my present miserable existence. How I shall do it, shall be a matter of my own determination. There are many things a capable woman can do to provide for herself, if not hampered with domestic cares. Will you release me from all the requirements of wife and mother until you are able to support me as a woman of refined mind and understanding should be supported?

Jo. Your heart is still with me?

Mary. Poverty, Jo, I can no longer endure. Certainly, if you love me, you will not hold me to the treadmill of this comfortless existence.

Jo. No, God bless you Mary, no!

Mary. Will you give me my liberty, then, to act for myself without criticism or interruption?

Jo. (*Manfully.*) Yes.

Mary. [*Rises, and pushes back chair. Takes ring off her finger.*] Here is the ring you gave me at the altar of our marriage. Take it, and keep it until you can place it upon my finger again with the certainty that you can provide for me as my nature requires. [*Gives Jo*

ring.] Now, Jo, we understand each other.

Jo. I feel as if I were in a dream. But I think I understand. How about Annie?

Mary. She shall be your comfort.

Jo. Thanks—thanks. [*Sinks back in rocking-chair.*] Thanks.

Mary. It is time for you to lie down I fear you have been up too long. I'll fetch Saryann.

[*Exit, R.*

Jo. (*Looking at ring.*) Mary is right. I am wrong. The mine is my only hope. If that fails me, I am lost.

[*Enter Saryann, R.*

Saryann. It is time for you to lie down, Jo.

Jo. Here, Saryann, is a ring. Take it and keep it until I ask you for it.

Saryann. A ring!

Jo. Yes, a plain gold ring. If you are my friend you will do as I request. I am afraid, I might loose it.

Saryann. I am your friend, Jo. [*Takes ring.*]

Jo. Don't look inside of it, Keep it for me. I trust you.

Saryann. I will do as you request. [*Enter Mary, R.*] Come, Jo, I will help you to your bed. [*Jo rises. Saryann*

assists him. Jo very weak and feeble.]

Jo. Come, Mary, let me put my arm about you. Oh! I forgot.

[*He puts arm over Saryann's shoulder. She assists him to R. They exeunt, R.*

Mary. I could not leave him with his ring on my finger. The way is clear now.

[*Exit, R.*

Enter Henry at door, L. slyly. Looks around. Enter Saryann with a lamp, R. Sets lamp on table. She sees Henry.

Henry. Shhhhhh! [*Taps lips for silence, and beckons to Saryann. They tiptoe to each other to C. In whisper.*] I vanted to see you or Shim. Shhhhh! Here is der deet Shim gave Gorton for der glaim. [*Gives her deed.*] For some reason Gorton dit not have it regorded ven he vas in town. Dot Gorton is a rogue, sure. Gif der deet to Shim, und dell him I vill oxblain ven ve meet. Shhhhhh!

[*Tiptoes to door, L. and exits.*

Saryann. How queer! There seems to be a growing queerness about this house, at the present time. Mary acts more and more, each day, like a woman with a secret. And Jo—poor Jo!—has

become simple as a child. How fortunate, I am here to care for him.

[*Lights lamp.*

Enter Jim at door, L.

Jim. Wal, here I am. And I'm happy as a young squeerrel to git back agin. How's Jo?

Saryann. Better, but still weak. Did you get the iron tonic?

Jim. Sartain!—and a whole gallon of the best sherry wine, besides.

Saryann. Jo will be all right, now. Here is the deed you gave Gordon. It is not recorded. [*Gives Jim deed.*] Dutch Henry brought it, and told me to give it to you. He said, Gordon was a rogue, and, that he would explain later.

Jim. Wal, I'll be—

Enter Mary, R.

Mary. Why, Jim, you made a quick trip.

Jim. I didn't stop to watch the squeerrels. I've brought the powder, and I'm goin to work on Jo's claim tomorrer, if I can git a man to help me.

Mary. Saryann, you better get Jim something to eat.

Saryann. Come along, Jim, I'll get you some supper.

Jim. Lead on, Saryann! I'd foller you to the ends of the arth.

Saryann. Yes, if there were any victuals there.

[*Exeunt Saryann and Jim, R.*

Mary. Now is my chance!

[*Mary gets pen, ink and paper, and writes at table, R. hurriedly. Drops note in rocking-chair. Puts on plush hood, woolen gloves, and heavy shawl. Looks distractedly at R.E. and then exits hastily at door, L. Long pause, then clock strikes nine. Another long pause, and sleigh bells heard at distance from outside L. Another long pause, and Jo totters on from R*

Jo. I cannot rest. I have a smothered feeling to-night. I thought Mary was here. [*Hand on rocking-chair, supports himself and calls feebly.*] Mary! Mary, where are you? [*Sees note.*] What's this! A note! [*Picks up note.*] It is addressed to me. [*Reads.*]

Dear Jo:

I leave to-night, never to return. The horrid life of poverty and solitude, I have been forced to lead since our marriage, has destroyed all hope in me of your success. I shall sell the Golden Ledge for twenty five hundred dollars, and send the money to

you. I hope you will care for Annie with more consideration for her comfort and happiness, than you did for mine.

It is signed—*Mary.* And this is the end of love's journey—this is where we part. Sick; deeply in debt; a charge to my friends—this is the price we prospectors often pay for the developement of a mining claim. [*Calls.*] Jim! Saryann! She has gone! She has gone!

Enter Saryann and Jim, R.

Saryann Who's gone?

Jo. Mary.

Saryann. Mary gone! Where?

Jo. She has left me, forever. Where she has gone, or who she has gone with, I do not know. [*Gives Saryann note.*] I only know, she has gone—gone—[*With great pathos.*] left me forever.

[*Sinks down into rocking-chair.*

Saryann. It is all true. Mary has left Jo. She says in this note, never to return.

[*Jo groans.*

Jim. I'll go after her. I'll find her, Jo, and bring her to her senses. You bet I will!

Jo. (*Rising to feet with effort.*) No, Jim! I say, NO. If she wills to go, she must go.

[*Totters from rocking-chair. Is about to fall. Saryann catches him in her arms.*

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Jo Marlow's mining claim, the Golden Ledge. Mouth of tunnel with dump rear and to right of center. Grand mountain scenery surrounding. Mountains rising above mountains fringed with pine and cedar. Patches of snow here and there. Higher peaks covered with snow.*

Enter Jim, R. leading a burro with loaded pack-saddle on.

Jim. Wal, here we are. and thar is Jo Marlow's mine. It is some since I saw the old tunnel. [*Removes pack-saddle from burro.*] Come along. Snoops! I'll pint you fer home, [*Leads burro off R. Speaks off stage*: "Now git fer home." *Slap of strap.* "Git!" *Enter Jim with leading strap in hand, R.*] Poor Jo! he wanted to come, but Lord! Sary-ann wouldn't listen to it. She just set her foot down on that. He begged like a good feller, but she wouldn't let him come, nohow. I wish I was sick myself, just to have her take care of me. I'm sartain she would. Widder Flynn don't

seem to take to Saryann. I think she's jalous. Wal, I can't help it, if she is. I know I could marry widder Flynn tomorrer, if I wanted to, but I ain't so sartain about Saryann. I've half a notion to ask her. She promised to be a sister to me, and she has done everything fer me just like a sister, even to sewin buttons on my shirts, and mendin—Ahem!—my overalls. And then the pies and cakes she has baked fer me! I staked a claim fer her, and built her a good hewed-log cabin. She made the prettiest little garden in front of that cabin, and inside the cabin—Why! it's the neatest place in the world! You never saw such a woman to work as she is. She has actually made money sewing and nussin since she came to the camp. She made me take pay fer everything, I'd done fer her. I swore by all the stars in the sky I wouldn't take it, but she made me, saying, I would have to take it, or our brother and sister arrangement would come to an end. I couldn't stand that, so I took the money. Wal, I'll go into the tunnel, and examine the wall for ore.

[*Enters tunnel, lights candle, and disappears into tunnel.*

Enter Henry, L.

Henry. Vell, I dought I gome over, und dake a look at Sho's dunnel. Gorton vent avay last night. Shordly after he left, dere gome some vellers looging vor him. Vhen I tolt dem, he had gone to town, dey rote avay qvick. Dere's somedings oop! Vot it iss, I gan't dell yet, but I'm sure Gorton iss a rascal.

Enter Jim from tunnel.

Jim. Hello, Henry!

Henry. Vy, hello, Shim!

Jim. I've come to work on Jo's claim.

Henry. I dought you do dot.

Jim. Are you workin fer Gordon yet?

Henry. Yah, but Gorton's gone avay.

Jim. Gone, is he! Whar?

Henry. To town.

Jim. Whar's young Flynn?

Henry. He's gone home.

Jim. Back to the Gold Nugget, hey?

Henry. Yah, vhere his mutter is.

Jim. When did Gordon leave?

Henry. Last night.

Jim. Last night!

Henry. Yah, aboud nine o'clock.

Jim. About nine o'clock! I smell a rat.

Henry. I've schmelt more as a dozen rats since I peen mit him.

Jim. I begin to think that feller's a d—d rascal.

Henry. Oh! he's a rascal, sure. I came priddy near goin oop der spoud by him yesterday.

Jim. Is that so! How was it, Henry?

Henry. Vy, he put a glass of vater on his assay table, und I vas shoost goin to trink it, vhen he yells at me, dere vas poison in it vot kills fourteen men deat.

Jim. You didn't drink it?

Henry. I should say nod.

Jim. Gosh, but you had a narrer escape!

Henry. You bet, I dit!

Jim. What kind pizen was it, Henry?

Henry. He sait it vas cyanide for testing bulp for golt.

Jim. For testing pulp! He's up to some cunning game.

Henry. I saw Gorton schnooping arount here, yesterday.

Jim. The deuce you say!

Henry. Yah, I dit.

Jim. I've got an idee, Henry,—an idee. You hear me, Henry,—an idee.

Henry. Vot iss it, Shim, vot is it?

Jim. I'm onto Gordon now. I've got his game.

Henry. Oxblain, Shim, *ox*blain.

Jim. Gordon is testing Jo's mud,—the drillings that come from the drill holes. He is testing for gold. He

has found something, and gone to town,—yas, he has gone to town.

Henry. Vell, vot's dot got to do mit der drillings?

Jim. I can't gather that part of his game, jest yet.

Henry. Vot of he found dose drillings rich mit golt?

Jim. Why, he'd know the next blast would uncover the vein—the gold vein.

Henry. I see somedings, but I don't know vot I see yet.

Jim. I'll be gosh hanged! if I do either. He don't want to let me find him pokin 'round here. I'd jest take a fall out of him, even if he did pay me twenty five hundred dollars.

Henry. I pelieve Gorton vill neffer gome back. Dere vas some vellers on horsepack here, last night, lookin vor him. Vhen I tolt dem he vas gone to town, dey rote avay like dey vas afrait dey vould loose him.

Jim. Rode like the devil, did they?

Henry. Yah, yah! like der tevil. Oh, Gorton's a rascal, dot's sure. Und, so help me geevizz! I pelieve Marlow's vife has gone mit him.

Jim. [*After a moment's thought.*] I believe you are right, Henry.

Henry. I vonder vot Sho vill say of

he finds oud his vife has gone mit Gorton?

Jim. What can he say? What can any man say, if a woman wants to go away with another man? I don't see a goldarned thing to be said, but to grin and bear it.

Henry. Sho's vife vas too young vor him, anyvay.

Jim. If she was old enough to marry him, she was old enough to be true to him, and faithful to her child.

Henry. Dot's right, Shim.

Jim. The world is full of these little birdies, that no more 'n hop onto one twig, than they want to hop onto another.

Henry. Poor Jo!

Jim. That's What I say, Poor Jo!

Henry. I understant, Saryann is goin to town as soon Sho gets petter.

Jim. To stay?

Henry. Yah;—she's goin to teach kindergarten to schmall shildren.

Jim. Who told you that?

Henry. Vidow Schmidt.

Jim. How did she find it out?

Henry. Saryann tolt her.

Jim. Saryann never said nuthin to me about it.

Henry. [*Changing the subject.*] Sho

vas very fond of his vife. It must be hart on him, dot she is skibbed oud.

Jim. He looks like a dead man. But say, Henry, now that Gordon's gone, why not work fer me? The way things look in Jo's tunnel, I'm sure a couple of shots will bring us to what Jo's been lookin for.

Henry. All right, Shim, I vork mit you.

Jim. Jo left the holes all ready for loading.

Henry. Dit Saryann gif you dot deet?

Jim. Sure. Say Henry, you're the darndest, cutest, old sauerkraut, I ever saw in my life!

Henry. Vell, I'm honest, und stant by my frients, und brodect decent peoples, don't I?

Jim. You bet! (*Extending hand.*) Put her thar, Henry! [*They shake hands.*] I'm yours for everything, I got.

Henry. How about, Saryann?

Jim. I hain't got her yet, but if I ever do get her, the feller that tries to locate her 'll have to send your uncle Jimmy to the sperrit world.

Henry. She's a dandy, Shim!

Jim. Wal, we better quit our gabble, and git to work. The giant powder is over thar in the pack. Take some of

it into Gordon's house and warm it. If it blows up the house, come back and get some more.

Henry. Dot's a h—l of a shoke!

Jim. It would be, if you'd snap a cap in it. [*Henry laughs.*] I'll get the loadin traps together.

[*Retires back.*

Henry. (*Getting powder out of pack-saddle.*) Schnap a cap in it! [*Laughs.*] Shim's a shoker, ain't he?

[*Exit, L. with powder, laughing.*

Jim. (*Advancing with loading tools.*) I wonder if that Dutchman has his eye on Saryann. Saryann said, she never could take to sauerkraut, so I'm safe on that score.

[*Lights candle, and exits into tunnel.*

Enter Mary, R. exhausted.

Mary. The officers took Gordon before we had ridden ten miles. He pushed me out of the sleigh, and whipped up his horse. Shots were fired, and I ran. I have trudged back through the snow.—Some one coming!

[*Hurries off, R.*

Enter Henry, L. with powder wrapped up.

Henry. In dis vetter, der powder gets soon cool.

[*Henry runs to tunnel. Jim meets him at mouth of tunnel with light. They disappear in tunnel.*

Enter Mary, R.

Mary. To be beguiled by a forger! I can never go back to Jo. He would spurn me. I fear, I am lost to all good. The world will point me out as a creature of shame. The veil of my folly has been lifted, and I see my delusion in all all of it's terrible reality. [*It begins to snow.*] Jo will never forgive me—no, never,—never, never—

[*Hurries off R.*

Enter Jim and Henry from tunnel on the run. They stand back from it's mouth. A pause, then loud report. Smoke comes from mouth of tunnel.

Jim. That was a strong blast. Wal, come, Henry, we'll go to Gordon's cabin, and wait 'til the smoke clears away. Whew! it's snowing like fury, and then some.

[*Exeunt Jim and Henry, L*

Enter Mary, R. wrapping her shawl about her.

Mary. (*Wildly.*) Where shall I go for food and shelter! I am an outcast! A wretched wife and a cruel, cruel mother! I will go to the mine. The tunnel is

warm, and there I can rest my weary body. I cannot go there now. I must hide about until Jim leaves. That claim is all I have left in the world. It is mine. Here is the deed. I will not sell the Golden Ledge, now,—no, not if I starve. I will keep it for Jo and Annie. But they will hate me. They will drive me from them. I cannot bear to—think—I cannot—

[*Gives a low hysterical scream, and hurries off R.*

Enter Jim and Henry, L.

Jim. I'm goin in, Henry.

Henry. Der powder schmell must be priddy strong yet.

Jim. I'm goin in, powder or no powder; smoke or no smoke. I feel in my bones we've struck it. Here I go!

[*Enters tunnel, lights candle, and disappears.*

Henry. Vell, Shim's gone in. Sho is a poor man now: maype vhen Shim comes oud, Sho vill be der richest man in der country here. A mine is a fine ding vhen you fint der golt. Of I strike it vonce, I don't vork anymore, dot's sure. Vell, I be glat, of Sho got it. Sho iss a fine man, und vorked hart, und hat some awful tough times mit it. Of he's got it, efferypotty vill be glat.

Enter Jim from tunnel, excited, and waving hat.

Jim. Whoop! Hooray! No need for another shot to tell the story. Jo has won. The whole face of the tunnel is spotted and streaked with free-gold. It is thar, just as Jo saw it in his dream.

Henry. Shake, Shim, shake! [*They shake hands vigorously.*] Hooray! Now show me der veller vot's got schnakes in his het, und pretzels in his poots!

Jim. If Gordon doesn't come back by the first of the year, I'll have you jump his claim. Then we'll sell it to Jo, and divide the proceeds. It ought to bring good money, now that Jo has struck it.

Henry. You bet, I do dot. Vell, ve go to der house now, und take a schmoke, und—Vell, I got it in a shug.

Jim. All right, Henry. The game's won, and we can take it easy.

Henry. You bet! Ve schnap a cap in it.

[*Exeunt both, L. laughing. Snow storm increases.*

Enter Jo, feeble and tottering, on an eminence at R. R. E. Descends to stage.

Jo. I slipped away from Saryann.

The storm may kill me, but I could not restrain myself. Jim will strike it to-day, and I must be there when the gold breaks through. I must see it with my own eyes. No one here. [*Advances, and looks around.*] Yes, here is Jim's pack-saddle and the powder. I felt the jar of the blast quite awhile ago. Maybe Jim is in the tunnel. He has struck it, I know he has. My dream was so real, it cannot but be true. God almighty will surely hear the cry of my soul in this dark hour, and give me the only earthly thing that can lift me out of the deep pit of misery into which I have fallen: gold, gold, gold—

[*Totters to tunnel, excitedly. Takes candle out of pocket, lights it in mouth of tunnel, and disappears in tunnel.*

Enter Mary, R. very weary.

Mary. I am certain it was Jo. He took the short cut through the timber. I see a light in the tunnel. He has just gone in. [*Throws off shawl, R. front.*] God give me courage and strength! I will go and return the deed to him—the deed to the mine for which he has suffered so much.

[*Increase snow storm.*

Jo staggers from tunnel, wild with excitement.

Jo. My dream is true. The gold is there. The tunnel is ablaze—I am rich! I am freed from poverty and toil. [*With dejection and pain.*] Ohhhh! I forgot;—I have deeded the mine to Mary, and, by this time, she has sold it—sold it for twenty five hundred dollars. No, I'll not believe it!!! The very angels would stay her hand.

Mary. Jo!

[*Rushes to him.*

Jo. Mary, my love,—you here!

Mary. I—I have come to give you back the—deed. Here it is. [*Gives Jo deed. He glances at it and thrusts it into his pocket. Grasps Mary's hand.*] Nay, let me go! I am no longer worthy of your love, nor even of your mercy.

Jo. Let you go! Never, you willing to stay. The gold is struck, and we are rich. So come, Mary, and forgive me as I forgive you. What you have done, I do not care to know. We will forget the poverty and misery of the past, and look only to the peace and prosperity of the future. [*Throws arms about her.*] Though the storm beats upon us, these arms are about you, dear. [*Mary drops head on his breast. He kisses her.*]

My God, what ails me!

[*Staggers back from her.*

Mary. (*Alarmed.*) What's the matter, Jo?

Jo. And is this the end of it all! Mary, I am dying!

[*Reels, and falls in the snow.*

Mary. (*Looking wildly down on Jo.*) He is dead! [*Screams and rushes to L.*] I must have help!

[*Rushes off L. Snow falls heavily on Jo's prostrate form. Voice of Saryann at distance, off right, calling:* "Jo! Jo!" *This is repeated several times, each time call sounding nearer.*

Enter Saryann, R.

Saryann. (*Still calling.*) Jo! Jo! [*Looks around anxiously. Sees Jo. Rushes to him, kneels, lifts up his head in her arms. With sobs and anguish.*] He is dead! He is dead! [*Kisses him passionately.*] I loved him—I—but he did not know—Jo! [*Takes flask from pocket, pulls cork with teeth, and presses flask to his lips.*] Jo! [*Corks flask and returns it to pocket. Rubs Jo's face.*] His eyelids move.—There is still life. [*Jo groans.*] Thank God, he still lives!

Jo. (*Coming to.*) Why, it is Saryann!

I thought Mary was here.
Saryann. No, it is I, Jo—Saryann.

Enter Mary, L. followed by Jim and Henry.

Tableau.

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Inside Jo Marlow's cabin. It is refitted and refurnished, showing wealth and comfort. Large business desk, R. Jo Marlow, well dressed, discovered seated at desk.*

Jo. (*Arranging papers.*) It is now three years past since the gold was struck. Since that time, the mine has cleared me, above all expenses, three hundred and sixty thousand dollars. Jim, I made superintendent, and Henry, foreman. I gave Jim a check for twenty thousand, this morning, and Henry a check for a like sum. I have deposited twenty thousand in the bank to Saryann's credit. I will give her the bankbook today. Snoops, that bore the powder to the mine on the day of the discovery, is fed regular, washed, and curried, and given the run of the place. He eats the flowers and gnaws the trees at his pleasure. Thus my gratitude has paid something of the debt, I owe these good people and the little burro, Snoops. Mary, poor girl, has been dead

over two years. She seemed to fade away like a flower in the frost since the day of the snow storm. The greater my solicitude, and the more devoted my love, the faster she seemed to fade away. Maybe I was the frost. [*Thoughtful pause.*] Gordon resisted the officers, and they shot him dead. He had forged a note for twenty thousand dollars. It was in connection with a mining deal. Shortly after I recoverd from my sickness, Saryann went to town to teach a class of little children. After Mary's death, I finally succeeded in persuading her to return to care for Annie. I was very fortunate in this. She has been a mother, indeed, to my little Annie.

Annie runs on at door, L.

Annie. Oh, papa! come and see Snoops. He jumps and jumps, and acts so funny since I came back from the mill.

Jo. Maybe Snoops likes you.

Annie. *Of course* he does. He likes everybody but Dutch Henry.

Jo. Snoops likes cabbage and Henry likes sauerkraut. Perhaps Snoops is afraid Henry will eat up all the cabbages.

Annie. I guess that's it, papa.

[*Jo rises and closes desk.*

Jo. Well, we'll go and see Snoops.

[*Exeunt Jo and Annie at door, L.*

Enter Saryann. R. Is very neatly dressed. Has feather duster in hand.

Saryann. It is getting almost impossible to keep this old cabin clean. Jo has built on several rooms, and with these I can do fairly well. He says, there are too many dear memories and old associations connected with this cabin for him to abandon it. Jo is a noble man. I have never seen his like.

Enter Dutch Henry at door, L. ridiculously dressed up. He sets two chairs, C. Points to the one on the right, and motions to Saryann to take it, which she does. He hangs hat on other chair to her left, and then sits down in the chair.

Henry. Saryann, I haf gome to talk mit you.

Saryann. Very well, Henry.

Henry. Vhen I lofe a voman, Saryann, I can't shtant it.

Saryann. Then why don't you forget her?

Henry. Vorget you? Imbossible! I dell you, Saryann, I lofe you, und vant you for my vife. Der boss gave me a sheck vor twenty tousand dis morning, und I'm brebared to dake care of a vife. Vill you marry me?

Saryann. No.

Henry. No?

Saryann. No!

Henry. (*Aside.*) No is nein in German, und nein means nix. [*Aloud.*] Don't you denk you could lofe me of you tried, Saryann?

Saryann. No.

Henry. No?

Saryann. No!

Henry. Vell, you must marry somepotty!

Saryann. Perhaps—

Henry. It's too bad for a nice, blump, sensible voman like you, Saryann, to all der vhile live by yourzelf alone.

Saryann. Then you want to marry me, because you think I am lonesome?

Henry. Dot's it, egactly. Vot do you denk aboud it?

[*Takes feather duster from Saryann and fans himself with it.*

Saryann. I think you are a good man, Henry, and I want you for a friend, not for a husband.

Henry. (*Taking her hand.*) Vell, den ve drop der marry business, und say no more aboud it. Ve all der time be frients—goot frients.

Saryann. Yes, Henry, I shall always be your friend, and I hope you will always be mine.

Henry. Dank you, Saryann. [*Jim peeps in at door, L.*] Ve understant each other now.

Jim. (*Aside.*) That Dutchman's proposin to Saryann! Jimmie 'll have to get busy.

[*Disappears.*

Henry. It iss mit regret, dot I am refused like a fish in der zee vot can't get caught. [*Drops Saryann's hand.*] Oh, vell! [*Rises; drops duster on chair, and takes up hat.*] Vell, goot-tay. [*Going—turns.*] Ve always be frients, anyvay.

Saryann. (*Rising.*) Always, Henry.

[*Henry goes to door, L; turns, has back to open door.*

Henry. You don't denk you could give me der least hope, do you?

[*Donkey's head thrust in door, L.*

Saryann. No, Henry, I don't think I'll marry anybody.

Henry. How aboud Shim Brier? [*Donkey, Snoops, nips him behind.*)

Achhhhh! Vot's dot! [*Grabs himself, and turns,—sees donkey.*) It's dot t—d asel! [*Donkey's head withdrawn.*) Git oud mit you! [*Stands in door, and kicks out at donkey. Swat heard, and Henry falls on back from door as if kicked by donkey.*) He kicks awful! (*Rising, hands on stomach—aside.*) Oh, my, vot a pain!

[*Exit at door, L. nursing his pain.*

Saryann. Poor Henry! It is evident, Snoops does not like his proposal. I'll warrant, Jim Brier is not very far away.

[*Picks up duster and disposes of it, R.*

Enter Jim Brier at door, L. with fits and outbursts of laughter.

Jim. Didn't that burro hand Henry a bunch! (*Aside*) I'll bet his crout-sack will be sore for a month. [*Stops laughing abruptly; arranges chairs, C; points to chair right and motions to Saryann to take it, which she does. He sits down in chair to her left.*] Saryann, I've wanted to talk to you seriously for a long time.

Saryann. Any of your people dead, Jim.

Jim. No,—they never die. But that's not it. I've something in my heart—

Saryann. In your heart! Why don't you go and see a doctor?

Jim. What's the matter with you? I don't want no doctor, I want a wife.

Saryann. Then why don't you get one?

Jim. That's what I'm trying to do.

Saryann. I didnt know you had been courting anyone.

Jim. You didn't, hey?

Saryann. Never heard a word.

Jim. And had no idee, I suppose?

Saryann. None whatever.

Jim. [*Gives a long whistle.*] See here, Saryann, I'm clean gone on you, and I want to marry you. That's plain English. Now, let me hear from you.

Saryann. I have always considered you a true man, Jim, and a sincere and devoted friend.

Jim. Will you marry me? (*Aside.*) How I am sweating! [*A pause,—then to Saryann.*] Did you hear what I said?

Saryann. Jim, we have always been good friends, have we not?

Jim. Wal, I guess, yes!

Saryann. Will I have to marry you to keep that friendship?

Jim. Not by a darned sight!

Saryann. Do you mean what you say?

Jim. Sartin! (*Aside.*) I'm sweating

like a race-horse.

Saryann. Well, if you really mean what you say, and are the man I believe you to be, the time has come when I must tell you—

Jim. (*Aside.*) She's mine!

Saryann. that I cannot marry you.

[*Donkey's head thrust in at door, L. Braying, and moving of donkey's ears.*

Jim. [*Jumping up and shaking his fist at donkey.*] Snoops, you goldarned jackrabbit! you'd eat the grass off of a dead man's grave. [*Donkey's head withdrawn. Jim sits down.*] Saryann, you ain't goin to marry that Dutchman, are you?

Saryann. No. If I were in the marrying mood, I would prefer you to him.

Jim. Wal, that's some consolation.

Saryann. (*Taking his hand.*) Jim, my dear old friend, I am sorry that our friendship has been touched by this proposal. I cannot tell you what your good friendship and brotherly protection has been to me. But I cannot marry a man just because he has been my friend, and been good to me. Nevertheless, I can regard him with a sincere interest, and an earnest good will. The man I

marry, I must love, Jim, with that kind of love that rises superior to all the affections of friendship,—that love that blends souls, and transforms a man and a woman into one. This is the marriage of God's sealing. And is it not written: "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Jim. Saryann your words astonish me. I never thought you had such beautiful idees in you. I see it plainly, that I am no more fit to be your husband than Dutch Henry.

Saryann. Shall our friendship continue in the same honesty, sincerity, and simplicity?

Jim. (*Jumping up.*) Yas, by gosh! as long as grass grows and water runs, no matter what you do or who you marry,—jest so you don't marry Dutch Henry.

Saryann. (*Rising.*) Well, I'll never marry Dutch Henry.

Jim. Then we'll fergit this, and go right on as we did before.

Saryann. You dear, old Jim! I'm just going to hug you like a sister.

[*Hugs Jim.*

Enter Jo at door, L.

Jo. Oh, excuse me!

Jim. It's all right, Jo. Come right ahead. Saryann was jest measuring me fer a new sweater. Wal, I must go back to the mill.

[*Exit at door, L.*

Jo. (*Aside*) It is as I thought. [*To Saryann.*] I expect, Saryann, you and Jim will want to get married soon. So, as a slight token of my gratitude to you for your great kindness to me and motherly care of Annie, I have deposited twenty thousand dollars in the bank to your credit. Here is the bankbook and some blank checks.

[*Offers bankbook and checks to Saryann. She does not take them. Jo looks steadily at her.*

Saryann I'll never marry Jim. He understands that.

Jo. Nor Henry?

Saryann. No, I assure you.

[*Jo puts bankbook and checks back in pocket. A pause.*

Jo. Saryann, you don't look like an old maid. You have a fresh, matronly look—a motherly appearance.

Saryann. I have been a mother.

Jo. You have! You have never said anything about your child or husband that I have ever heard of.

Saryann. No. There are events in

the life of each of us, which we do not care to talk about.

Jo. (*Advancing and taking her hand.*) Ah! Saryann, I fear you have had a sorrow in your life, as I have had in mine.

Saryann. I have, Jo. But you won: I failed.

Jo. I understand you now. From the barren soil of failure, moistened by the tears of disappointment, springs the delicate flower of charity. And if you have not charity, no mortal has! Come, sit down by me here, and tell me your story.

[*They sit, C: Jo in chair to left.*

Saryann. My story is quickly told. I failed once, and have been struggling with life ever since. I loved a man when I was very young, and they said I was very fair, but he betrayed me. My child died. The finger of shame was pointed at me, and I left. This is all my story.

Jo. (*Thoughtfully.*) And he betrayed you.

Saryann. Yes, Jo, he betrayed me, but the true purposes of my soul remained strong and steadfast. My love was my weakness, and my innocence, my downfall.

Jo. Love was my weakness. But I thank God for that weakness, and the pure simplicity of my nature in it. It is in such weaknesses as these that the soul revels. It is true, they are the prey of the world, as the dove is the prey of the hawk,—the lamb the prey of the wolf. I believe, Saryann, you and I are very much alike in sentiment.

Saryann. I am glad you think so, Jo. Really, I do not want to leave Annie. I love her as if she were my own child.

Jo. I've thought a great deal about that. It would break Annie's heart to part with you.

Saryann. I won't leave her, Jo, and—I don't want to leave you. You are not strong, and are comfortable and happy now. I shall never marry—no—not unless—

Jo. You do not look like a woman of thirty five, Saryann. I just noticed a remarkable light in your face. I am forty five years old, and, I guess, I look like a man of fifty.

Saryann. There is that in you, Jo, that time cannot blemish.

Jo. Do you think so?

Saryann. Your sorrow was as my sorrow, but the more it erred, the more you sheltered it. Yours is a great heart,

Jo:—one that a true woman would delight to put her trust in.

Jo. I fear, Saryann, you have formed too exalted an opinion of me. But, to tell you the truth, it is no greater than that which I have formed of you. Why leave Annie and me at all? Why not stay forever?

Saryann. I want to, Jo.

Jo. We have both suffered; both drank of the bitter cup of sorrow. And now, when happiness approaches, why not reach out our hands and receive it?

Saryann. I am ready, Jo.

Jo. (*Rising.*) Then, since you have refused the others, it is now my turn. I must tell you frankly, you are my choice. There is no other living woman for whom I entertain a greater regard and respect; no other living woman, I would rather make the mother of my little Annie; no other living woman, I would rather walk side by side with to the end of life's journey. Will you be my wife?

Saryann. (*Rising and extending both hands to him.*) Yes, Jo, gladly. I have loved you from the first day I met you—from the time I talked with you at the well. Your earnest

soul and sincere heart awoke in me at once the eternal sentiment—love. [*Winds arms around his neck and gazes into his eyes.*] Yes, Jo, I am yours. Yours, until death do us part; yours, in whatever sorrow comes to darken our path; yours, in whatever joy comes to light us on our way.

Jo. (*Placing a hand on either side of her head.*) How handsome you look to-night! You seem to grow in beauty.

Saryann. Whatever we love, Jo, grows beautiful in our love.

Jo. (*Kissing her and clasping her to his breast.*) Ah! my good, kind companion, we have come up through much tribulation, but we will wash our robes white in the blood of the Lamb.

Enter Annie at door, L.

Annie. Papa, what are you doing?

Jo. I am coaxing Saryann to be your mama.

Annie. (*Clapping her hands.*) Oh, goody, goody! I'm so glad!

Saryann. (*Throwing arms around Annie and kissing her.*) You little dear!

Jo. After our marriage, Saryann, I will build a house in town, but we will

still keep up this old cabin. Whatever I have once taken into my care and affection I cannot give up.

Saryann. Of course not. But Annie must go to school, and have the association of well-bred and respectable children.

Jo. Most assuredly!

Annie. I'm so hungry, Saryann.

Saryann. Your bread and milk is on the table, dear. [*Going.*] Come, Jo, you'll want some lunch before going to the mill.

[*Exit Saryann with Annie, R.*

Jo. She loved me all the while, but I did not recognize it. How simple! But I loved another—[*Clock strikes nine. Jo startled and agitated, listens.*] Nine o'clock! The very hour Mary—Ah, well 'tis past. I have found a wife, and Annie a mother.

[*Exit, R.*

Enter Jim in working clothes at door, L

Jim. Wal, I've layed off my fine feathers, and come back fer the bosse's orders fer the night. The next time I go after a woman fer a wife, I'll make sure she's wantin me fer a husband.

Wal, I cleaned that Dutchman out, and that's some satisfaction.

Enter Henry in working clothes at door, L.

Henry. Vell, Shim, vhen's der vedding going to be?

Jim. [*Gruffly.*] What wedding?

Henry. You und Saryann.

Jim. Never.

Henry. Ditn't you bropose?

Jim. Yas.

Henry. Und she sait, vot?

Jim. She didn't say, "vot." She said, no.

Henry. Dot's shoost vot she sait to me.

Jim. So you proposed to her, too, hey?

Henry. Yah, I dit.

Jim. And she said, no?

Henry. Yah. Shim, do you know vot I denk?

Jim I have no idee—not the least in the world.

Henry. She's going to marry der boss,—she's going to marry Sho.

Jim. By gosh, I never thought of that!

Henry. Oh, sure!—Dot's vot she do.

Jim. They'll make a noble couple.

Henry. Shoost to denk, I vent und asked her to marry *me.* [*Laughs excessively, and slaps knees.*] Marry me! Shoost a crazy Dutchman! [*Quieting down.*] But she fooled me, Shim. She vas alvays so kint und zimple, dot I thought, by sheevizz! she vould marry me for der asking.

Jim. That's jest the way it struck me, Henry. But when she opened to me the mind within her, my candle went out.

Henry. Oh, vell! dot's der end of it for you und me. Most any man vill make a t—m fool of himself vonce in a vhile.

Jim. Wal, we've had our holiday.

Henry. Do ve vork to-night?

Jim. Yas, you will put on the night shift at eleven o'clock.

Enter Jo and Saryann, R.

Jo. (*Advancing to Jim and Henry.*) I am glad you have come, my old friends. I have something to say to you. Saryann and I are going to be married soon unless one or the other of you object.

Henry. (*Aside to Jim in whisper.*) Vot dit I tell you.

Jo. You both made love to Saryann,

and neither of you won her. I never made the least advance to her until she had rejected you both. Do I speak the truth, Saryann?

Saryann. Yes. Jo.

Jim. It's all right.

Henry. Yah, dere iss no objection.

Jim. You have my consent, Jo.

Henry. Und mine.

Jo. Then come and shake hands, and call it square.

[*Jo and Saryann shake hands with Jim and Henry.*

Henry. (*Aside.*) Vot a sausage I must 'a peen to denk I could marry a voman like dot!

Jo. The widow Flynn has been trailing you, Jim, for the last year, and the widow Schmidt has been smiling on Henry ever since he came to the camp. Come boys, make these women happy, as I shall strive to make Saryann. Saryann and I will be married two weeks from to-day. Get your partners, and come and be married with us.

Jim. Jo, I'll be thar with the goods.

[*Exit Jim at door, L. hurriedly.*

Henry. Vidow Schmidt veighs three hundred and sixty pounds, but I'll be dere mit der goots too, Sho, of der vagon don't preak down.

[*Exit at door, L. hurriedly.*

Jo. (*Putting arms around Saryann.*) There is nothing left for you and me to do, my good Saryann, but to make each other happy.

Saryann. In you, Jo, I realize the dream of my life.

Jo. (*Smiling.*) Then *your* dream has come true. I dreamt a dream once, the miner's dream, and it came true.

Saryann. Now I know that God is love; and, that He never forsakes the one who, in all sorrow, all adversity, all shame, is true to the DIVINITY within them.

Jo. Yours is a great soul.

[*Annie calls off R.* "Saryann."

Saryann. Annie is calling.

Jo. I am going to the mill. Good-night.

[*Kisses Saryann, then picks up hat, and goes to door, L. Saryann goes to R. They turn and gaze at each other.*

Saryann. Good-night, Jo!

[*Exit, R.*

CURTAIN.

THE END.

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